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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2004 annual session

(7-11 June 2004)*

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I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

1. The President of the Executive Board highlighted the importance of reducing maternal mortality and the work being done by UNICEF to promote safe motherhood, improve the nutritional status of children and women, help girls to enrol and remain in school, and prevent early marriage. These efforts were all related to the UNICEF global priorities of girls' education, child protection and fighting HIV/AIDS. He welcomed Mr. Toshiyuki Niwa, recently appointed as Deputy Executive Director, with responsibility for overseeing relations with the Board.

2. The Executive Director said that the global climate of terrorism and counter-terrorism had diverted resources and political will from the vital work of development. She stressed the importance of partnerships and collective action for children, including UNICEF work with other United Nations agencies such as joint programmes with the World Food Programme (WFP) and collaboration on child survival and development with partners including the World Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency.

B. Adoption of the agenda

3. The provisional agenda and proposed timetable and organization of work of the session (E/ICEF/2004/8) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board and adopted.

4. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex to the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 56 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session. In addition, 2 United Nations bodies, 4 specialized agencies and 8 National Committees for UNICEF had also submitted credentials.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director

5. The Executive Board had before it the annual report of the Executive Director on progress achieved against the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) (E/ICEF/2004/9), which was introduced by the Executive Director.

6. Speakers expressed appreciation for the report's improved comprehensiveness, readability and analysis. The report provided a candid assessment of both achievements and areas for further improvement, and showed a shift from reporting on activities to reporting on results. One delegation said that the report could be further improved by including a chart of selected programme performance indicators and key results from selected evaluations.

7. Many delegations said that the report highlighted clearly the contributions of UNICEF to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and the goals

adopted by the General Assembly at its Special Session on Children. One speaker cautioned that global aggregation of results might obscure major difference in progress in some countries. Responding to queries, the Executive Director said that UNICEF would contribute to the 2005 assessment of progress towards the Millennial Goals by working closely with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the other funds and programmes. UNICEF was participating very actively in the reference group established to review the work of the Millennium Project, and was contributing to the strengthening of national monitoring systems through support to *DevInfo*.

8. Several speakers stated that UNICEF-assisted interventions should directly support national priorities. For instance, to increase national ownership, a national programme on HIV/AIDS should receive support from development agencies through a unified approach. Local and national capacity-strengthening should remain a main strategy for UNICEF. One delegation said that the MTSP had helped to inform national development priorities and had assisted countries in learning from international experience. Some members said that the upcoming mid-term review of the MTSP would further clarify the linkages between the MTSP, the Millennial Goals, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and national priorities. A speaker said that the report presented UNICEF much more coherently as an agency which systematically focused on the building of national capacity and informing policy development, rather than simply filling gaps in those areas.

9. One delegate suggested that a future MTSP should allow for better adaptation to region-specific needs. For instance, environmental health issues posed major risks for children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The secretariat clarified that the MTSP primarily indicated the areas where UNICEF aimed for overall excellence and was available to provide strong country support; however the country programme approach — focusing on support to national priorities — remained fully applicable.

10. Some delegations asked to what extent UNICEF had been able to influence poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) to become child-focused, and others said that the poverty orientation of UNICEF work needed to be strengthened overall. The Executive Director referred to the report on the UNICEF experience in joint programming (see paras. 68-81 below), which provided details of its work on some of those issues.

11. One delegate said that UNICEF should aim to better present itself and its work in the context of the United Nations system, the work of the major development banks and global partnerships. The Executive Board should be kept informed about experiences with emerging partnerships and lessons for the future. Several speakers suggested that UNICEF should contribute more to the United Nations reform agenda, especially at the country level. The Executive Director said that partnerships among United Nations agencies at the country level needed to be based on a strong programmatic focus. Examples of high-quality coordination included the relationships with WFP and WHO.

12. Some speakers said that UNICEF had been at the forefront of the introduction of a human-rights-based approach in United Nations cooperation, but that more attention should be paid to gender issues and children in situations of armed conflict. One delegation suggested that human rights principles should influence

every aspect of UNICEF programming. Asked for more information on the findings of external assessments of the application of the human-rights-based approach in UNICEF programming, the Executive Director said that some of the initial findings included: an uneven application among regions; a stronger promotion of participation; a clearer focus on the most vulnerable; more systematic use of the observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; the use of girls' education as a good entry point for addressing gender issues; and the need for a stronger overall focus on gender mainstreaming.

13. Some delegates asked how humanitarian action was aligned with the priorities of the MTSP, saying there should be one coherent strategy to deal with both emergency and non-emergency situations. The Executive Director said that the newly revised Core Commitments for Children in emergencies would become a stronger feature in the next plan, to increase the understanding and predictability of UNICEF work. One speaker suggested that the focus on the plan's targets must also be evident in humanitarian action and that UNICEF should use the findings of the United Nations Study on Violence against Children for advocacy purposes. Responding to a comment, the Executive Director said that staff security was taken extremely seriously, including through training and emergency preparedness.

14. Some delegates referred to the increased attention by UNICEF to results-based management. One speaker said that results-based management, collaboration on Common Country Assessments (CCAs)/UNDAFs and other harmonization measures contributed to improved results. The results matrices attached to the revised country programme documents (CPDs) were useful, but it was suggested that they be attached to the draft CPDs submitted to the Board at the annual session.

15. Several speakers confirmed the ongoing validity of the MTSP organizational priorities for the current plan period (2002-2005) and possibly for the next (2006-2009). One delegation suggested a careful review of the plan's targets, especially those related to early childhood development (ECD), HIV/AIDS and child protection. Their usefulness would increase if they could be more specific and relevant to international development efforts. That would require a shift away from targets focused on policies or plans to quantifiable targets that showed the actual impact of programmes on children and families. Some of the important investments and related progress were not tracked by the current indicators (e.g., for water, sanitation and nutrition). The Executive Director agreed on the need to shift wherever possible to measurements of impact, in addition to indicators of policy change. However, quantifiable targets were not always possible, and some qualitative indicators might still be necessary in the future.

16. Delegates commented positively on the increased financial contributions to UNICEF, which exceeded the targets of the financial plan, but noted that most of the additional funds were other resources for emergency interventions. Several speakers stressed the importance of addressing this imbalance, to ensure the predictability of UNICEF assistance and the organization's capacity to provide strategic assistance in all programme countries. Asked if the limited increase in regular resources income was mainly the result of variations in exchange rates, the secretariat said that while this was an important factor, there had also been real growth. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF said that the Committees provided an increasing share of funds to UNICEF, including some 40 per cent of

regular resources. He stressed the timeliness and quality of reporting on contributions as essential to maintaining the Committees' fund-raising abilities.

17. To suggestions that UNICEF provide stronger support to the least developed countries (LDCs), the Executive Director said that the formula for allocating regular resources, decided by the Board, included a commitment to increasing resources to LDCs. Funding patterns were also determined by the pattern of other resources contributions from donors, and had been to some extent affected in 2003 by the large contributions for Iraq. The ability to allocate more funding to LDCs was also linked to adequate availability of regular resources. Responding to a query about why the 7 per cent set aside was funded from regular resources and not other resources, the Executive Director said that it had been approved by the Board in decision 1997/18 (E/ICEF/1997/12/Rev.1).

18. Comments on girls education concerned uneven school enrolment rates in different regions and countries, and the slow pace of progress in applying a human rights approach and gender analysis to girls' education in countries with the most severe problems. UNICEF needed to advocate further for inclusion of girls' education as a priority in PRSPs and sector-wide approaches (SWAps). On behalf of the African States, a delegate said that improved education of girls had the potential to be a catalyst in solving many other development challenges. Many countries had adopted that priority in their own national plans, but some still required assistance. Partnerships needed to be strengthened, including with the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The secretariat agreed that more could be done to promote girls' enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The United Nations Girls Education Initiative was a major tool, and high-level discussions had taken place with WFP and the World Bank on sharing of responsibilities, as part of the Fast-Track Initiative.

19. Other speakers said that UNICEF support to basic education had been very strong in countries recovering from crisis, including through "back to school" campaigns. A representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization commented on the positive cooperation with UNICEF, for example on the development of policies for ECD in West and Central Africa. A speaker said that lessons were available from the evaluation of the African Girls Education Initiative, particularly in respect of sustainability of the supported interventions, and asked about lessons learned from the "child-friendly" schools initiative. The secretariat responded that UNICEF was working on the costing of the initiative and the identification of its most critical elements. Asked about children with disabilities, the secretariat said that the focus so far had been on prevention of disabilities, but UNICEF also supported the integration of children with disabilities into schools, especially in Asia.

20. A delegation commented on the need to further strengthen child survival efforts and the family. Also, the budget titles of programme components relating to ECD and immunization were inconsistent among country programmes. A delegate speaking on behalf of the African States stressed the importance of strengthening the family, together with the building of national capacities for the delivery of essential services. The Executive Director responded that the strengthening of families was a key strategy of the ECD priority, and had been supported, for example, through the community-based Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses initiative and better parenting programmes, which would be expanded.

Variations in the titles of budget components of UNICEF-assisted programmes reflected the flexibility of the country programme approach, which supported national priorities.

21. The UNICEF partnership with WHO on child survival was referred to positively by some delegates. To comments that achieving child mortality goals would depend on a significant reduction of neonatal mortality, the secretariat said that UNICEF was expanding its partnerships for child survival, including with the international financial institutions, bilateral donors and the United Nations system, and had established an interim secretariat that would be headed by a senior UNICEF staff member. Increased attention would be given to learning from past experiences in child survival, including intersectoral approaches, and to malaria and measles control. UNICEF was also working with WHO to update a global strategy for immunization, which would incorporate activities supported by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and could be linked to the international financing facility proposed by the United Kingdom and to collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Speakers referred to the critical role of UNICEF in supporting national ownership, building national capacities and promoting global vaccine security.

22. Several delegates applauded the increased UNICEF expenditure on fighting HIV/AIDS, though some said that it was still insufficient and little has been allocated from international funding mechanisms for orphans and other vulnerable children. One speaker said that HIV/AIDS should be the top priority for development assistance and should be linked to girls' education and support to early childhood care. It was also said that UNICEF support to prevention of HIV/AIDS and care for those affected must also extend to children in unstable and post-conflict situations. The focus on gender issues, the human-rights-based approach and working with young people needed to be strengthened in HIV/AIDS programmes. The legal dimension of protecting those affected by HIV/AIDS should be considered. The Executive Director said that coordination between United Nations agencies in support of national HIV/AIDS programmes had been very good but all actors needed to agree to good coordination principles. Speaking on behalf of African States, a delegation stressed the importance of attention to helping countries to develop national plans against HIV/AIDS, and of involving young people as agents of change.

23. One delegate stressed the important links between the child protection and the Millennium Development Goals, saying that UNICEF was expected to provide leadership in that area. The secretariat agreed that more work was required in the identification of indicators for child protection issues, e.g., juvenile justice, in which UNICEF was working with other agencies.

24. UNICEF work on violence, abuse and exploitation of children, including trafficking and bonded labour, was considered to be of high priority by many delegates, and some suggested that the share of funding for this area be increased. In areas where the organization has no comparative advantage, UNICEF should seek partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), other agencies or the private sector. UNICEF confirmed its continued advocacy for the adoption of International Labour Organization Convention 182 and indicated that the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children faced serious funding shortages.

25. A delegation asked for more details of UNICEF support to children in armed conflict, including child soldiers, particularly in the light of Security Council resolution 1539 (2004). Another speaker said that children's rights were also violated in situations of foreign occupation.

B. Draft country programme documents

26. The Director, Programme Division, gave an overview of the draft CPDs before the Executive Board. Among the lessons learned from their preparation were the benefits of cross-sectoral integration, the importance of integrating emergencies into country programmes, where appropriate, and the need for more communication with and mobilization of communities. Of the 21 programmes, 18 had been developed as part of the joint programming process, and several were linked to PRSPs.

27. Several delegations praised UNICEF for its country programme work and the quality of the CPDs but noted some concerns and suggestions for improving the documents: strengthening the gender perspective, especially in education; clarifying the connection between the CCA/UNDAF and the role of UNICEF in the UNDAF; including a risk analysis, especially on the capacity of UNICEF and partners to achieve results; and taking into account the possibilities and difficulties of capacity-building, providing estimations of national capacity.

28. In addition, UNICEF was encouraged to systematically post UNDAFs on its website; provide Board members with a list of programme countries and cycles; play a greater role in United Nations country teams (using Madagascar as an example); and foster synergies between the United Nations country team and other partners, especially bilateral development agencies. Two delegations said that Board members had to deal with the same agenda items, country programmes and joint programmes, for example, at Board meetings for three different organizations. Another speaker urged UNICEF and its partners to make the performance and other criteria for providing support to countries more flexible.

29. The Director welcomed the comments. A list of programme countries and cycles would be given to any delegation requesting it. The joint programming process was full scale and intensive.

Eastern and Southern Africa

30. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for Angola, Burundi, Madagascar and Zimbabwe (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.1 — E/ICEF/2004/P/L.4), which were introduced by the Regional Director.

31. A speaker complimented UNICEF on its work in Africa, especially in the areas of child survival, maternal health and girls' education. UNICEF had effectively responded to massive population displacement, outbreaks of disease and difficulties in access to public health care. Result matrices should be included in draft CPDs in order to provide a clearer picture of the proposed country programme outcomes and the mechanism that would be used to achieve those results.

32. The representative of **Angola** spoke of the positive impact of UNICEF efforts to promote national ownership of programmes, rebuild routine immunization systems, and support the recent finalization of a national HIV/AIDS strategy, the disarmament and reintegration of children affected by war and demining

programmes. Delegations said that the draft CPD was relevant to the country's situation, although one speaker said that in view of the precarious situation in the country, the programme should focused on a flexible transition from service delivery to capacity-building. A delegation commended the programme's focus on education, building national statistical capacities and coordination with all partners, including the national authorities, and asked if there was plan for joint programmes with common plans and budgets, and if it could be included in the revised CPD. To questions about the specific role of UNICEF in programming for the returning population, the Regional Director emphasized that UNICEF supported integration of children affected by conflict into their communities through long-term investment in their families/communities, especially schools and other training opportunities.

33. The representative of **Burundi** said that the CPD was in line with the UNDAF and based on national priorities. Another speaker said that the CPD had a clear human rights perspective, but did not stress enough the fragility of the political situation and the implications of the expected return of 800,000 refugees from the United Republic of Tanzania. The Regional Director said that UNICEF was working closely in both countries with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on a returnee programme. Delegations said their should be more focus on the reintegration of child soldiers, and one asked about a related project that was being funded by the World Bank. The Regional Director said that national reconciliation and peace education were now part of the curriculum and were being introduced into the school programme. Negotiations with the World Bank were ongoing and financial resources were expected soon from the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme. A delegation said that the proposed CPD was too general and insufficiently focused on the particular situation in Burundi, especially on community capacity development. The speaker commented on weak partnerships with such international health-related institutions as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, WHO and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Referring to baseline statistics and expected outcomes, one speaker suggested that the analysis in the CPD focus on different age groups. The Regional Director spoke of the effective introduction of the *DevInfo* system in Burundi.

34. The representative of **Madagascar** referred to the positive outcomes achieved through the dynamic collaboration between his Government and its development partners, especially in the areas of good governance and the fight against corruption, basic education, immunization and maternal and child health. To comments on girls' education, including concerns about the quality of education and on the reliability of indicators that were used to measure changes, the Regional Director said that the programme planned to use such innovative approaches as the "sister" programme, which aimed at reducing girls' drop-out rates through a "buddy" system of older girls helping younger ones. Another speaker voiced concern about the ambitious objectives contained in the CPD.

35. The representative of **Zimbabwe** sought clarification on the reasons for the short-term period of the proposed country programme. The Regional Director replied that the two-year duration for the programme had been agreed upon by the Resident Coordinator and the country team, in consultation with the national authorities. Another delegation said because most bilateral donors had stopped direct cooperation with the Government and were supporting civil society, UNICEF should serve as an advocate for children in relation to the Government. The

Regional Director said that to a large extent UNICEF was already playing this role, and the revised CPD would reflect it more clearly. A delegation said that a recent mission to Zimbabwe had reported on two joint United Nations programmes being planned with a common workplan and budget, and suggested that this be reflected in the revised CPD. Referring to recent UNICEF/WFP recommendations that UNICEF focus on chronic malnutrition, a speaker said that the malnutrition figures in Zimbabwe were not particularly high by emergency standards. Instead, UNICEF should give strong emphasis to HIV/AIDS and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In addition, the CPD was weak on the role of the Government, and should have more analysis on needed investment in health and education. The Regional Director explained that the low rate of investment in education and health was partly a result of economic sanctions. The rapidly growing number of orphans, currently over 1 million, had negatively affected school enrolment rate.

West and Central Africa

36. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPD for Cape Verde (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.5), which was introduced by the Regional Director. She was accompanied by a 14-year-old girl from Niger who told the Board about her participation in the Nigerien Scout Movement. With support from UNICEF, the scouts had received training on HIV/AIDS education which helped them to teach other young people about responsible behaviour in the face of this threat.

37. On the draft CPD for **Cape Verde**, the representative of that country expressed appreciation for the quality of the proposed country programme. He referred to the complementarities of the work of UNICEF with that of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations and WFP in meeting the nutritional needs of children through school canteens. The Regional Director reiterated the support of UNICEF for Cape Verde, including a programme being undertaken in collaboration with WFP and other organizations, called the Alliance for Sahelian Countries, which would include Cape Verde, Mali and Niger, to promote girls' education in particular. Another delegation said that the CPD was ambitious, particularly in the education sector, as school enrolments were still low, teacher training needed to be strengthened and schools needed better equipment. The section of the CPD on sexual exploitation could be stronger. Another speaker expressed appreciation for the emphasis on rights-based programming. The Regional Director replied that UNICEF was aware of the issue of early pregnancy, which she herself had discussed with the President.

East Asia and the Pacific

38. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for Malaysia and the Philippines (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.8 — E/ICEF/2004/P/L.9), which were introduced by the Regional Director. She also reported on current major issues in the region. Recently, a major international communication campaign about trafficking had been launched by the Governments of China and Viet Nam, aimed at changing communities' attitudes and behaviour towards girls, the primary victims of trafficking. She also spoke about child injuries in East Asia, which accounted for one half of all annual child deaths. A recent regional conference on the issue, sponsored by the Alliance for Safe Children and UNICEF, would lead to development of programmes on child injury prevention in many countries of the region.

39. A 17-year-old girl from Mongolia presented her experiences, along with those of other children, on working with the Mongolian Parliament to influence legislation on juvenile justice issues.

40. A delegation expressed satisfaction at the sense of growing cooperation among countries in the region through periodic ministerial consultations. The Regional Director replied that the consultations had expanded to include donor countries from the region.

41. A speaker expressed support for the proposed country programme for **Malaysia**, saying that while Malaysia was making good progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, some child development problems remained. The representative of Malaysia expressed appreciation to UNICEF for the country programme, while expressing concern on the proposed withdrawal from Malaysia after 2007. UNICEF had much to contribute to Malaysia in terms of experience sharing, capacity-building and fund-raising. There was a need for a continued UNICEF presence in Malaysia beyond 2007, and innovative funding opportunities to augment the country programme budget from within Malaysia could be explored.

42. A speaker expressed support for the disparity reduction strategy of the programme for the **Philippines**, and the prevention of trafficking of children and women. The representative of the Philippines highlighted significant activities achieved by the Government with UNICEF assistance, including the 25-year framework plan for development for children called "CHILD-21", and its mainstreaming in national and local plans; and the "child-friendly" movement, which had begun in 1999 and gained nationwide momentum nationwide. Another speaker mentioned the long-standing partnership between the Government of the Philippines, UNICEF and her Government. She pointed out the importance of the link to the MTSP, and the need to highlight the work on child protection issues, conflict affected areas and peace-building.

Americas and the Caribbean

43. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPD for the Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.6), which was introduced by the Regional Director.

44. Delegations welcomed the subregional approach of the programmes and their rights-based approach. A speaker emphasized the need to support programmes in countries in transition and to shift from the traditional focus on service delivery to a more strategic focus on influencing social policy at the institutional level.

45. The representative of **Chile** expressed regret that UNICEF would no longer allocate regular resources to his country as of 2008. Although there was a need to prioritize the poorest countries, a mechanism was needed to consolidate the strategic role of UNICEF in Chile. The country's indicators did not necessarily reflect its social inequalities. He underscored the problems of violence and the still pending legal reform in his country. He also recommended evaluating on a regular basis the level of resources generated within Chile, as was the case for Argentina, Mexico and Uruguay.

46. One delegation stated that UNICEF partnerships in the region were very important to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The Regional Director replied that the Goals offered an opportunity for the United Nations system to

concentrate on fundamental issues, and that all countries were increasingly incorporating them into their public policies.

47. To comments on HIV/AIDS and access to generic drugs, the Regional Director referred to cooperation between Brazil and other countries in the region to reach agreements and obtain better prices. UNICEF was also participating in an initiative of the Pan American Health Organization under which every pregnant girl is tested for HIV to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the virus.

48. To concerns about violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, the Regional Director said that UNICEF supported Governments in developing legislative agendas to prevent these crimes. Asked if UNICEF had a strategy and funding for the ministerial meeting on violence against children and adolescents, to take place in Costa Rica this year as part of the Ibero-American Summit, he replied that UNICEF had approached donors for more support. Responding to a comment about the lack of reference to the Inter-American Children's Institute in the list of strategic partnerships mentioned in the CPD, he said that UNICEF and the Institute were coordinating on a presentation on the regional harmonization of laws related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child for the ministerial meeting.

49. Responding to a statement about migration, the Regional Director reported that UNICEF had recently completed a study stating that every 58 seconds, one person is lost from the region to permanent migration, and the social costs of this phenomenon were high for abandoned children. UNICEF had some modest projects in this area but much more needed to be done. Asked about UNICEF work with disabilities, he said that UNICEF was in dialogue with Rehabilitation International for possible collaboration. On the issue of malnutrition, he recalled a recent meeting on iodine deficiency disorders held in Lima, Peru. Some 16 per cent of households in the region did not have access to iodized salt. UNICEF was looking at issues of how to strengthen capacities and dialogue on chronic, acute and global malnutrition in the region.

50. A delegation expressed concern that the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) would be leaving that country after 10 years of fruitful work, and said that there was a need to carry on with the goals of the peace accords, which were fully in line with the Millennium Development Goals. The Regional Director acknowledged that the exit of a mission of nearly 600 people would be a challenge for the United Nations country team.

Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States

51. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.10 — E/ICEF/2004/P/L.20), which were introduced by the Regional Director. The UNICEF Representative for Tajikistan also presented the draft CPD for that country.

52. Many delegations commended UNICEF for taking a leading role in the recent CCA/UNDAF exercises that had preceded the preparation of the draft CPDs, and for its involvement in countries in transition, evolving role in the region and effective work at the regional and community levels. Several speakers referred to the Second

Inter-Governmental Conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia, held in Sarajevo in May 2004. Others expressed concern at such key problems as the high level of child mortality; the spread of HIV/AIDS; the use of drugs; the most socially disadvantaged groups including refugees and disabled children; violence against children; trafficking of women and children; and the need to strengthen assistance to post-conflict countries and countries in transition.

53. A number of delegations suggested that UNICEF expand its partnerships with such agencies as the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and USAID; have specific and disaggregated key indicators in the CPDs to assess progress and evaluate results along with monitoring plans; join other donors in not providing payments directly to local officials for coordination purposes; and use existing technical expertise in the region for better implementation of country programmes.

54. The representative of **Azerbaijan** referred to some 600,000 women and children refugees and internally displaced persons in his country, who suffered from physical and psychological trauma as a result of the ongoing conflict. There was a need to strengthen the institutional framework to address child-related issues through exchange of experiences with experts from countries with similar backgrounds. He added that the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan had been unable to attend the meeting due to the delay in visa issuance by the host country's embassy in Baku, and this had not been the first time.

55. On the CPD for **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, a number of delegations recommended that the revised document include steps to facilitate and improve statistical reporting, analysis, evaluation and monitoring; that UNICEF be encouraged to promote child and human rights in the country, including education and child protection reform; and that national capacity-building be further prioritized.

56. The representative of **Kazakhstan** raised the issue of inadequate efforts to improve the social, economic and environmental situations of the long suffering areas of the Aral Sea and requested more effective assistance to the affected regions.

57. The representative of **Serbia and Montenegro** said that although many issues were facing children in her country, due attention should be given to children in Kosovo, where one half of the population was under 25 years old, and ethnically motivated violence, crimes and terrorist attacks were major problems, especially for children of minorities. The Regional Director said that UNICEF worked with the provincial institutions of self-government and the United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo to address issues of social exclusion through the education programme.

58. The delegation of **Tajikistan** suggested that special attention be given to promoting a supportive environment for civil society and NGOs that would be involved in the implementation of the new country programme, and to expanding the participation of children and young people in social life. Several other speakers stressed the importance of assisting post-conflict countries like Tajikistan. UNICEF could play a role in a dialogue with central ministries, particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, on policies relating to children's rights. UNICEF was urged to react to the increasing number of girls dropping out after the first years of school. The UNICEF Representative for Tajikistan spoke of UNICEF cooperation

with national partners and a UNICEF-supported study on the causes of girls dropping out of school.

59. On the draft CPD for **the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, one delegation said that the programme reflected well-chosen goals and interventions, including the fight against HIV/AIDS, despite the still low infection rate in the country. The speaker encouraged UNICEF to take a strong advocacy role in addressing the significant lack of information about diseases and the existence of organized crime dealing with drugs and trafficking of women.

60. The representative of **Turkmenistan** said that while the draft CPD contained some suggestive conclusions, such as the reduced concern of the Government and weakened social assistance programme for children, slow structural reforms in education and health care, and discrepancies in assessments of indicators for children and maternal mortality, the Government appreciated its 10-year close cooperation with UNICEF in improving the situation of children and women. He hoped that there would be a full mutual understanding of the goals for creating favourable conditions for the development of Turk children. The Regional Director took note of the concerns raised.

61. The delegation of **Uzbekistan** said that its Government would do everything possible to ensure the well-being of the children and women in the country, and called on the donor community to support the country programme.

62. The Regional Director called for strengthened aid to this region, which was underresourced and the other resources ceilings were quite conservative. The next eight years were window of opportunity for making a real difference in achieving child rights.

Middle East and North Africa

63. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, as well as a recommendation to increase the other resources ceiling for the approved country programme for Iraq for 2004 (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.21—E/ICEF/2004/L.23), which were introduced by the Regional Director. He also commented on recent developments in the region. While noting the peace advancement in the Sudan with the signing of the framework agreement, he referred to the "new and terrible conflict" in Darfur. On the Occupied Palestinian Territory, he said that unless there was a sudden lessening of the conflict or other improvements in the economy, there would be a major breakdown in the health and nutrition of children within the next few years. At the Arab League's ministerial meeting, held in Tunis in March, a plan of action for the Arab child had been endorsed. A number of important recommendations on children had been adopted by the Arab League Summit in May.

64. Delegations found the CPD for **Iraq** to be realistic, especially with regard to capacity-building. All speakers recognized the difficult security conditions under which UNICEF staff worked. To a request for additional information about the "cluster approach", the Regional Director said that it was a turning point for the international community on how to approach emergencies. Another delegation encouraged UNICEF to include more information and details on innovative thinking for programme delivery and within the existing security constraints. A speaker asked where the regional focus would be, in view of the UNICEF presence in

Baghdad, Basra and Erbil in Iraq and in Amman. The Regional Director agreed on the need for additional information on innovative means for programme delivery and security conditions that curtailed activities on the ground. While the Iraq office was presently operating out of Amman, he hoped that soon, Baghdad would again serve as the UNICEF centre of operations for the country. A speaker said that the draft CPD was consistent with Iraq's national priorities and needs and the goals of the Millennium Declaration. Speakers also noted the rights approach to programming in the CPD, adding that there was a welcome opportunity to focus on salt iodization and nutrient fortification activities. Another delegation asked about current needs in childcare and the availability of health supplies and water in the country. The Regional Director said that a number of large-scale surveys had been completed and would be published by the end of June.

65. The representative of the **Islamic Republic of Iran** referred to the soundness of the programme and expressed satisfaction at the acknowledgement of the country's proneness to natural disasters. He asked whether adequate attention had been paid to the issue of drug trafficking and its effect on children. The Regional Director, referring to his recent visit to Zahedan, acknowledged the work done by the Government in relief operations following the devastating earthquake in Bam. He agreed that the drug trafficking component should be strengthened in the revised CPD.

66. See chapter III, decision 2004/6 for the decision of the Executive Board on the draft CPDs.

Statement by Director, Regional Office for Europe

67. The Regional Director for Europe said that combined with growing awareness of illegal trafficking of children, and residual poverty and exclusion affecting children in some social groups in the industrialized world, the issue of independent monitoring of child rights within rich nations remained a key concern of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Some 23 European States now had either a children's ombudsperson or some other form of independent monitoring of children's rights. The National Committees for UNICEF were involved in supporting the preparation of national reports to the Committee, and in follow-up to the Special Session on Children. The Committees' primary purpose, however, was fund-raising, and in 2003 UNICEF income from the Committees was higher than ever, with the Japanese Committee alone contributing more than $100 million. The National Committees were also undertaking internal reform, and effective governance was an agreed element in each of the Joint Strategic Plans undertaken by UNICEF and individual Committees.

C. Assessment of the UNICEF experience of joint programming

68. The Director, Programme Division, presented a report on the assessment of the UNICEF experience in joint programming and other innovative and collaborative approaches (E/ICEF/2004/10).

69. A number of delegations thanked UNICEF for its leadership role in joint programming and expressed their support for its continued efforts to meet the challenges faced by the United Nations. Joint programming provided the opportunity to expand cooperation among the United Nations funds, programmes

and agencies and noted the importance of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Guidance Note on Joint Programming both as a reference document and as a fundamental part of United Nations reform initiatives. One speaker expressed optimism about joint programming helping to reach the targets of both the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals.

70. The importance given to national ownership and national development priorities in the joint programming process and in joint programmes was welcomed. One speaker said that this augured well for the sustainability of programmes, while another said that national ownership combined with decentralization would enhance programmatic effectiveness. However, a delegation cautioned that joint programmes should be carried out only with government approval.

71. All speakers emphasized the potential offered by the joint programming process and joint programmes for reducing duplication and transaction costs and for increasing coordination and efficiency. One delegation stated noted that current economic growth in Africa would not be sufficient to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and stressed the importance of the United Nations exploring ways to eliminate duplication and to use resources effectively.

72. A number of delegations said they appreciated the distinction given, both in the UNDG Guidance Note and in the presentation, between joint programming and joint programmes. They cautioned that joint programmes did not necessarily follow from joint programming and stressed that a pragmatic approach to joint programmes must be taken to ensure they could add value. The attributes of each United Nations agency should not be lost in a joint programme.

73. The link between PRSPs and the joint programming process, particularly the CCA and UNDAF, was stressed. A number of delegations noted that UNICEF was aligning its work with PRSPs and SWAps, which helped to prioritize children's issues.

74. Delegations said there should be increased resources and strengthened staff capacities, as well as the provision of clear guidance, to ensure the success of joint programming. However, one delegation said that increasing staff capacity should not result in reduced funds for programmes.

75. Speakers expressed concern about the slow pace of implementation of joint programmes and the few examples to date of these programmes. More needed to be done to accelerate joint programme implementation and pooling of resources to improve programme delivery. One delegation said "business as usual" was not an option and expressed the view, supported by several delegations, that the United Nations should be able to plan and implement one United Nations country programme.

76. One delegation said that although UNICEF was an active partner in the United Nations country team, doubts existed about the full commitment of UNICEF to United Nations reform and to working with other United Nations agencies to bring it about. Several delegations stressed the need for UNICEF to cooperate more fully with United Nations partners at the country level.

77. Delegations requested that UNICEF set targets for joint programmes and report back to the Executive Board on progress in the implementation of those

programmes. One speaker said that this reporting should include information on the percentage of total resources allocated to joint programmes.

78. The representative of the National Committees for UNICEF, while welcoming the UNDG Guidance Note, said that around one third of the resources of UNCEF was raised by the Committees and that the ability of UNICEF to report on its work should not be diminished by the requirements of joint programming.

79. The Director said that the comments encouraged UNICEF to do better both as a member of the UNDG and as a member of the United Nations country team. The collective aim was a harmonized programming process to support countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The first phase in that process included the CCA and UNDAF, which had improved significantly. The introduction of the results matrix had led to shared common outcomes among the United Nations agencies. He underscored the link between the PRSPs and the CCA/UNDAF and said that the ability of the United Nations country team to participate in PRSPs was dependent on a Government's request. While the United Nations country teams still lacked experience in the implementation phase of joint programming, more experience in more countries was forthcoming, together with improvements in the monitoring and evaluation phase.

80. The Director reiterated the commitment of UNICEF to participate in the implementation of joint programmes, where appropriate, and emphasized that there were no administrative, operational or programmatic restrictions on UNICEF participation in joint programmes and in the funds management options. He reiterated the commitment of UNICEF to ensuring that staff were fully equipped to follow the UNDG Guidance Note. A detailed guide on joint programming and the operational details of joint programmes would be issued soon.

81. See chapter III, decision 2004/8 for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

D. Progress report on the evaluation function in UNICEF

82. The Executive Board had before it a progress report on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2004/11), which was introduced by the Director of the Evaluation Office.

83. Delegations commented on the importance of the findings of the meta-evaluation undertaken by UNICEF on the quality of its evaluations, and recognized that much remained to be done to sharpen their focus and improve their quality. UNICEF needed to continue to strengthen norms and standards to improve the quality of evaluations at the level of country offices.

84. Some delegations highlighted the importance of the work undertaken in the area of capacity-building, for both national partners and UNICEF staff, and the importance of strengthening evaluation associations. A delegation also lauded UNICEF efforts to make evaluation more participatory, while recognizing that the approach was a challenge.

85. Most delegations endorsed the proposal to do fewer but better, high-quality and more strategically selected evaluations. The issue of the prioritization of evaluations was also raised, as was the need to focus on the five MTSP priorities. A

delegate suggested a closer correlation between the MTSP priorities and the Millennium Development Goals in the choice of evaluations.

86. A number of delegations stressed the importance of collaboration by country offices with the United Nations country teams on country programme evaluations, joint evaluative exercises to enhance overall United Nations capacities in evaluation. They also stressed the need to formulate an evaluation mechanism for the UNDAF. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to pursue its efforts in collaboration with the United Nations Evaluation Group to reach a system-wide consensus on norms and standards.

87. Several delegations welcomed the fact that the report provided the findings of key evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office. One encouraged UNICEF to provide regular updates on the linkages between results-based management and evaluation. A speaker suggested that UNICEF increase financial and staff resources for evaluations, and stressed the key role of regional offices in evaluation.

88. See chapter III, decision 2004/9 for the text of the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

E. Orphans and other vulnerable children affected by HIV/AIDS: panel discussion

89. Mr. Peter McDermott, Chief of the UNICEF HIV/AIDS Section, highlighted the key roles played by UNICEF in the protection, care and support of children, including as a global convenor; in fostering programme and intellectual leadership; and in promoting partnerships and strong advocacy. He emphasized the importance of meeting the goals of the General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS; agreements on what needed to be done; and the clear consensus and guidance provided by the new *Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS*.

90. Ms. Anne Peterson, Assistant Administrator for Global Health, USAID, detailed her Government's response in partnership with UNICEF and others. She emphasized the programmatic focus of USAID on all orphans and vulnerable children (from all causes); the importance of the full range of child survival and development interventions; and strengthened mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating programme and national-level progress.

91. Ms. Silvia Stefanoni, Save the Children Fund-United Kingdom (SCF-UK), described the partnership with UNICEF in Rwanda, highlighting the distinct comparative advantages of the two funds; the contributions made to the strengthening of the Rwandan response to the orphan crises of the past decade; and the key links between monitoring progress at community level and improved reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

92. Delegations praised the clarity and thoroughness of the presentations. Most delegations agreed that orphans and vulnerable children were critical elements of the UNICEF response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and that they deserved greater attention at all levels, and a central place in prevention, care and support activities.

93. Several delegations highlighted particular concerns and issues: not losing focus on the importance of prevention (and the availability of condoms for young

people); prolonging the lives of HIV-positive parents and children with improved health care and nutrition and access to anti-retroviral drugs; the need for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and countries submitting proposals to the Fund, to better address the orphans crisis, with more emphasis placed on the capacity of UNICEF to help countries apply for funds; the impact of gender and geographic (rural/urban) issues on orphans; in addition to the African crisis, the emergence of serious concerns in Latin America and the Caribbean and all other regions; the need to advocate for orphans and vulnerable children within PRSPs; the interest in the new Framework and the leadership provided by UNICEF; and the new campaign on orphans and other vulnerable children announced by the National Committees for UNICEF.

94. In response to queries, the representative of USAID described the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and drug access and anti-retroviral treatment programmes and policies. She explained that keeping parents alive was key and underlined the USAID strategy of providing better nutrition and treatment to infected children and parents, especially women.

95. The Chief of the HIV/AIDS Section said that Governments needed to assume a greater role in the care of orphans and that legislation and a system for monitoring the adequacy of government responses was important. He highlighted important partnership-strengthening (among UNICEF, USAID and WFP, especially) and rapid assessments and responses to the orphan crisis in Africa. The UNICEF Executive Director and other leaders had stressed the importance of placing orphans and vulnerable children higher on the agenda of the Global Fund and countries also needed to prioritize that area.

96. UNICEF was collaborating with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), both key members of the inter-agency task team, and country-level collaboration was improving in some places. The United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group on AIDS had developed precise indicators and field testing of the instruments was under way in Jamaica and Malawi. Regarding children who lived and worked on the streets, better survey methodologies had been developed to more precisely track those groups in data collection and to target interventions.

97. UNICEF and other agencies had emphasized the role of communities and the importance of getting resources to the community level to deal with the next generation of orphans. In the past year, UNICEF had increased its work with faith-based organizations and parliamentarians in caring for orphans stigmatized because of HIV.

F. Reports on field visits of Executive Board members

98. The Executive Board had before it reports on three field visits. The report on the joint visit to Guatemala by members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP (E/ICEF/2004/CRP.8) was introduced by the Vice-President and Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations. He said there was a need to strengthen the functions of the resident coordinator and the United Nations funds, agencies and programmes in the country, given the fact that MINUGUA would end on 31 December 2004. Other speakers said that efforts to promote and maintain the peace accords coincided with efforts to achieve the Millennium

Development Goals. More work needed to be done in several areas, especially in protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

99. The report on the field visit of Executive Board members to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (E/ICEF/2004/CRP.7) was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations. Members of the team said that Congolese children and women faced some of the worst conditions in the world, including HIV/AIDS, rape and other violence, high infant and child mortality rates, recruitment of child soldiers and poor education. They commended the UNICEF country office for its work despite those challenges and urged the Government, as well as UNICEF and its partners, to make every effort to protect the rights of children and women. Another delegation noted that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers needed urgent attention. One speaker stated that financial constraints were the greatest obstacle to progress and called for greater international assistance in building peace and in attaining the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments. The Executive Director said that, globally, perpetrators of gender violence as a tool of conflict were acting with impunity and she called on Member States to take action to stop this practice.

100. The report on the visit of Bureau members to Guyana (E/ICEF/2004/CRP.9) was introduced by the Vice-President and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations. Several delegations said that good progress was being made in areas that included capacity-building, expansion of the *Escuela Nueva* programme and results-oriented collaboration among United Nations agencies. One delegation said that the programme of cooperation between the Government and UNICEF could serve as a prototype for other agencies. Another speaker said that during the visit, the Bureau expressed a strong opinion in favour of raising the legal age of consent for girls to engage in sexual conduct, and that the Government had since pledged to raise it.

G. Timing of the approval of the UNICEF biennial support budget

101. The Executive Board had before it a report on the timing of the approval of the UNICEF biennium support budget (E/ICEF/2004/AB/L.2) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/2004/AB/L.3). The Comptroller introduced the report, which had been prepared in response to the Executive Board decision 2003/17 (E/ICEF/2003/9/Rev.1), in which the Board requested the Executive Director to explore options for the timing of the approval of the support budget in the context of one of the existing regular Board sessions.

102. The Comptroller stated that UNICEF did not consider the second regular session in September as an option, in order to ensure the continuation principle that the plan drives the budget, and to maintain the decentralized and integrated approach, which had been very successful. The secretariat recommended that the support budget be reviewed at the first regular session in January, and UNICEF would request the Executive Board to approve a one-month appropriation for the first month of the biennium at the second regular session in September. She added that the Advisory Committee remained of the opinion that the support budget should be reviewed before the beginning of the biennium.

103. Speakers expressed support for the principle of the plan driving the budget, adding that holding an extraordinary session in December placed a burden on delegations because of the meetings of the General Assembly. One speaker expressed concern about deciding on the support budget after the biennium had begun and asked if the budget could be discussed in draft form in September, with the formal approval at the January session. The Comptroller clarified that if the Board reviewed the budget at the January session, at the September session it would only be approving a one-month appropriation for January, until the biennial budget had been reviewed and approved at the January session.

104. See chapter III, decision 2004/7 for the decision adopted by the Executive Board.

H. Working methods of the Executive Board

105. The Vice-President of the Executive Board from the Western European and Others group of States presented a report on working methods of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2004/CRP.10), which had been prepared in response to Executive Board decision 2004/4. She reviewed progress in a number of areas and made the following recommendations on behalf of the Bureau:

(a) that the secretariat continue to offer an annual briefing in January for new Board members, but that it be less than a day;

(b) that the secretariat continue to make Board documents available six weeks in advance of a meeting and that it continue to organize informal consultations on agenda items;

(c) that invitations be sent to all Board members for these briefings and that advance notice be also included in the Journal so that interested observers can choose to attend;

(d) that, in preparation for oral reports, a two-page conference room paper be circulated to assist delegations to prepare for interactive discussion;

(e) that the secretariat prepare a work plan for approval by the Bureau to systematically review progress on each of the MTSP goals between the second regular session in September 2004 and September 2005;

(f) that the secretariat revisit the proposed guidelines for field visits and, in consultation with the Bureau, prepare a document for approval at the second regular session in September.

106. On behalf of the African members of the Executive Board, a delegation highlighted the importance of the informal briefings organized by the secretariat prior to the Board's sessions, because they contributed to a better understanding of the technical items on the Board's agenda. The African delegations urged the secretariat to continue including an item on HIV/AIDS on the agenda, and expressed their appreciation to the Board for putting an African country on the field visit agenda each year, which maintained a focus on Africa and its many problems. Other delegations agreed that there had been improvements in the Board's working methods. One speaker noted improvements in the organization of the joint meetings of the Executive Boards, but another said that these still needed improvement. It

was also suggested that there be a common framework for all field visits, and that the Board review and limit the number of reports it asked the secretariat to prepare.

107. The secretariat took note of the recommendations and said it would do its best to implement them. The Executive Director added that the secretariat was always open to suggestions as to how to improve the Board's working methods.

I. Other matters

Address by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association

108. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association (GSA) reported that at the GSA annual general meeting in June 2004, 25 staff, representing the nearly 10,000 UNICEF employees worldwide, had identified ways to improve UNICEF. In May, the GSA had surveyed staff who had highlighted several areas of concern: the non-competitive and inequitable remuneration of UNICEF staff; the fact that remuneration and career advancement were not linked to performance; unequal risks and burdens borne by staff; poor compliance of field offices with security standards; lack of privacy regarding HIV/AIDS under the Medical Insurance Plan in the field; the need for a UNICEF ombudsman's office, and for new performance goals and standards on the participation of staff in United Nations reform; and the need for the Board to support a transparent and effective process for selecting and appointing the new UNICEF Executive Director.

The situation in the Darfur region of Sudan: an oral report

109. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa reported on the situation of children and women in the Darfur region of Sudan, where more than 1 million people had fled their homes following months of conflict. A cease-fire had been extended until mid-August. Around 850,000 people were in camps and another 110,000 people had fled to neighbouring Chad. Around 575,000 children were acutely malnourished, and the nutrition situation was expected to seriously worsen.

110. UNICEF was the lead agency for providing safe drinking water to the area. UNICEF was also helping to build latrines; train social mobilizers in hygiene; provide vitamin A supplementation; and supply foodstuffs and therapeutic feeding material, basic drugs, mosquito nets and midwifery kits. A measles immunization campaign was planned to reach more than 2 million children. Efforts to establish and supply temporary schools in camps had resulted in high enrolment, especially among girls. Protection efforts included child tracing, family reunification and assessments of child soldiers. An appeal had been launched for $46.4 million but only $9.7 million had been received, leaving a serious funding gap.

Other items

111. Referring to an informal information note about the January 2005 joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP that had been distributed, one speaker said that if additional suggestions and proposals were made for revising the agreed-upon agenda, Member States should be informed of them well in advance of the meeting.

J. Closing of the session

112. Ms. Karin Sham Poo, Deputy Executive Director, said that the Board had given the secretariat guidance in a number of important areas. These included the valuable comments on the Executive Director's annual report and on the draft CPDs. The discussion on joint programming would continue both in the Executive Board and during the upcoming triennial comprehensive policy review. In the meantime, however, UNICEF would continue its work with many partners at the programme and project levels.

113. The President said that the session had been interactive, with participation by a wide range of delegations. On joint programming, he said that there had been some confusion between joint programming as a process and joint programmes as a product, but now delegations had a better understanding of the issues. He hoped that the secretariat would be able to report in a few years on how joint programming helped the United Nations to do business better and at a lower cost. The fact that there was no substantive decision on the subject indicated that there were still mixed feelings on the issue.

III. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board

2004/6.
Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

(a) *Approves* the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2004/*
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Angola	2005-2008	22 584 000	68 000 000	P/L.1
Burundi	2005-2007	10 908 000	27 000 000	P/L.2
Madagascar	2005-2009	25 710 000	42 000 000	P/L.3
Zimbabwe	2005-2006	3 850 000	14 000 000	P/L.4
West and Central Africa				
Cape Verde	2005	611 000	450 000	P/L.5
Americas and Caribbean				
Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay)	2005-2009	5 900 000	18 800 000	P/L.6
East Asia and the Pacific				
Malaysia	2005-2007	1 500 000	1 500 000	P/L.8
Philippines	2005-2009	11 570 000	32 000 000	P/L.9
CEE, CIS and Baltic States				
Armenia	2005-2009	3 405 000	3 569 000	P/L.10
Azerbaijan	2005-2009	4 760 000	4 700 000	P/L.11
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2005-2008	2 468 000	13 000 000	P/L.12
Kazakhstan	2005-2009	4 920 000	2 216 000	P/L.13
Kyrgyzstan	2005-2010	5 562 000	3 000 000	P/L.14
Romania	2005-2009	3 385 000	11 615 000	P/L.15
Serbia and Montenegro	2005-2009	3 325 000	36 500 000	P/L.16
Tajikistan	2005-2009	6 405 000	20 000 000	P/L.17
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2005-2009	3 060 000	10 000 000	P/L.18
Turkmenistan	2005-2009	4 680 000	1 300 000	P/L.19
Uzbekistan	2005-2009	9 260 000	8 560 000	P/L.20
Middle East and North Africa				
Islamic Republic of Iran	2005-2009	7 880 000	5 500 000	P/L.21
Iraq	2005-2006	3 872 000	196 700 000	P/L.22

(b) *Approves* an increase in the other resources ceiling for the Iraq country programme for 2004 in the amount of $140,000,000 (E/ICEF/2004/P/L.23).

Annual session
8-9 June 2004

2004/7.
Timing of the approval of the UNICEF biennial support budget

The Executive Board,

Affirming the principle that 'the plan drives the budget',

Agreeing that the biennial support budget should be formulated after the programme has been sufficiently articulated through the development of the draft country programme document for country offices, and the office management plans for headquarters and regional offices;

Decides that:

1. The biennial support budget for 2006-2007 will be reviewed at the first regular session in January 2006;

2. At the second regular session of 2005, an advance allocation will be approved for spending for the month of January 2006, based upon the previous year's expenditures for January.

Annual session
10 June 2004

2004/8.
Joint programming

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report on the assessment of the UNICEF experience of joint programming contained in document E/ICEF/2004/10;

2. *Decides* to defer the consideration of a decision to the first regular session in 2005.

Annual session
11 June 2004

2004/9.
The UNICEF evaluation function

The Executive Board,

1. *Commends* UNICEF for the quality of the report on the evaluation function contained in document E/ICEF/2004/11, the important progress that it reflects, and its thoroughness in identifying areas for improvement and future challenges;

2. *Welcomes* the progress made to date by the evaluation function in responding to new demands, particularly the increased emphasis on the achievement of results of programmes involving UNICEF, in the context of United Nations operational activities and inter-agency work at the country level;

3. *Notes* that much work remains to be done, including sharpening the strategic focus of evaluation work plans, improving efficiency and raising the overall standards of evaluation work;

4. *Emphasizes* that the evaluation function should be carried out in consultation with national authorities and in compliance with decision 2002/9 (E/ICEF/2002/8/Rev.1);

5. Bearing in mind the above, *encourages* the further strengthening of the evaluation function in UNICEF, with particular emphasis being given to progress in the following areas:

(a) Improving the efficiency and strategic value of the evaluation function by focusing on fewer, high-quality studies, with a strong emphasis on analyzing effectiveness and results;

(b) Continuing to improve the standards of evaluation at the country level, with the guidance of national authorities and building on United Nations system-wide norms and standards for evaluation, with the technical support of the Evaluation Office and regional offices;

(c) Accelerating progress towards joint evaluation work with national authorities, United Nations system and other partners, including with respect to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

(d) Continuing and expanding work with national authorities and other partners, and the United Nations country teams, to strengthen national capacity for evaluation work;

(e) Identifying best practices from evaluations for achieving the targets and objectives of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), and ensuring that procedures are implemented to enable the findings from evaluations to be systematically fed into the organization to secure organizational learning;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to prepare a further report on the work of the evaluation function for consideration by the Executive Board at its annual session in 2006;

7. *Further requests* that key findings from evaluations of the thematic areas of the MTSP be presented and discussed at the Executive Board as and when these become available.

Annual session
11 June 2004